

Testimony for SB01148

March 8, 2023

CT Legislators

Dear Honorable Members of the Legislative Committee:

I'm writing to urge you not to support SB01148 – or any other bills that would allow the hunting of Connecticut's iconic black bears.

Lawmakers proposing a hunt have cited an increase in bear-human encounters as the primary driver for a hunt, however, it's the preventable behavior of humans that has caused the "problem." I urge you to prioritize non-lethal methods to help prevent bear encounters by educating the public about not leaving trash cans outside, not putting bear attractants lying open in composts, and by passing legislation that prohibits feeding the animals.

Evidence also shows that bear hunts don't actually stop human-bear encounters, since hunts target bears in the woods, not the ones venturing into neighborhoods. Studies show that states that have allowed bear hunting — like Pennsylvania and Michigan — are still seeing an increase in human-bear encounters.

Allowing bear hunting also means that mother bears would likely be killed and orphaned cubs would be left to fend for themselves. Those baby bears likely will suffer and die without their mothers, who teach them to forage, avoid predators, hibernate, and other necessary life skills.

Bears don't deserve to be shot and killed because of people's careless actions. Connecticut must prioritize non-lethal solutions, including public awareness campaigns and bills that prohibit the deliberate feeding of the animals.

Connecticut lawmakers can help protect black bears and the public by prioritizing humane and effective solutions that don't cause bears to suffer and die. I strongly oppose SB 01148 and urge you to protect black bears and NOT pass this cruel and ineffective legislation.

Thank you,

Emily Raap